

Mana Research

Dragon Magazine 2014/11

"Humph~ Hummmph~"

- Takamiya Mana is humming a song she doesn't know while walking on the street under the sun of mid-afternoon in the residence area. A girl with her hair extended to her shoulder tied on the back of her head and a mole under her left eye.

"Well, it has been a while since I've come here. Even though Mana is pretty busy, Nii-sama might get lonely if I don't let him see me for once in a while."

- Mana then continued down the street with a springy step. Currently, Mana is heading to her brother — Itsuka Shidou's house. There are circumstances as to why they don't share the same family name even though they're siblings connected by blood.

- After she walked for a while guided by her memories, she arrived at the house in blue roof and "Itsuka" nameplate on the front gate.

"Well then."

- Mana didn't let Shidou know about her visit today. Mana imagines Shidou's surprised face when he sees her and loosens her cheek. However, Mana stopped her hand before she could ring the bell.

"...Ah—, come to think of it, I wonder if Kotori-san is at home."

- Mana said that with a sweat on her forehead. Kotori is Shidou's sister-in-law and is living in this house with Shidou. It's not that Mana has some discord with Kotori, but Mana can't allow herself to be found by Kotori due to several circumstances.

"Kotori-san will definitely send me to the hospital if she caught me..."

- Mana said that while scratching her cheek. After she looked around the house and make sure nobody's around, Mana sneaked herself pass the garden into the patio where she can peek into the living room.

- Mana's plan is to see if Kotori is around from the outside and will come again at later date if she is around. Even though she realized this act is not something to be praise of, Mana thought she has no choice.

"Umm, Nii-sama is..."

- However, the moment she hide herself in the shrubbery and look inside the window,

"Wha...!?"

- Mana widened her eyes in surprise.

"What... what is all this about...?"

- Mana said in an awed voice. It is no surprising, since the scene before her eyes is something unbelievable,

"Isn't the count increased from the last time...!"

- In the living room of Itsuka Residence, there are number of people beyond counting in one hand. First is Shidou. He's not the problem since this is Shidou's house and he is the reason behind Mana's visit today. Next is Kotori. She is also not a problem. Even though she is sister-in-law, she is still Shidou's sister.

- However the problem begins here,

'Ooh! This is so delicious! Yoshino, you should try it!'

'Ah—sure. Thank you very much.'

- Mana heard a voice from the window. The two girls talking just now are a girl with long night-coloured hair and crystal-like eyes, and a little girl with rabbit puppet on her left hand. They are Tohka and Yoshino who live in the mansion next to Itsuka Residence. Mana has met them before. Looks like these two visits Itsuka Residence pretty often.

- When Mana looked at the other side of the sofa, over there, a set of twins with the same face are playing a game.

'Gu... nununu! How could you attack me with the Red Shell... I will let you pay for it...!'

'Laughter. It's your fault for being careless. Here, the second shot.'

'Nuwaa!?'

- The two are furiously controlling the controller. Mana has seen them before on the battlefield. They are the Yamai sisters Kaguya and Yuzuru. The energetic girl is Kaguya and the downer girl is Yuzuru. Including the difference in their body, Mana thought they are such a fearless pair.

- Even though the situation is pretty grave with this number alone, Mana gulped down her saliva when she looked in the corner of the room where two girls are playing,

'Aan, Natsumi-chan. You shouldn't let your guard down even for at-home clothes~. Girls should always be aware that you are seen by someone at all time~ Ah, right~ Do you have some time after this~? I'm going to dress you up by myself~.'

'Gyaaaaa! Gyaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa!'

- The girl that Mana has never seen her before seems to be named Natsumi. The little girl with an unorganized hair and a sullen face is currently struggling from being hugged from behind by another girl — Japan's top idol, Izayoi Miku.

- Mana took a deep breath to calm herself down and started counting with both of her hands,

"One, two, three, four, five, six, seven..."

- Including Kotori, there are seven girls who have packed themselves in Itsuka Residence — or rather, this is more of a girls' dorm, or an inner palace where the girls whom Shidou shares his love with are gathered, than Itsuka Residence.

- Mana regretted her inattention. Mana couldn't believe that just because she looked away from him for a while, the situation would have turned like this.

"I can't allow it...! How dirty! You are dirty of the dead, Nii-sama...!"

- Mana gripped her fist tight. Even though Mana doesn't really know what she is saying, either way, she can't allow it. Mana believed that a boy must love a girl with all his sincerity. However, what about this?

- Seven girls. Before Mana knew it, Nii-sama that Mana love and respect became such a seven-timing lover boy. Judy Ongg once said a woman is an ocean, then no doubt he is a king of seven oceans — the Super Pirate Captain Shidou.

"...! No, not only that."

- Mana shook her hand remembering something. She realized she forgot about a certain person.

"Come to think of it, there is also Nee-sam... er, Master Sergeant Tobiichi."

- Mana said that name and dropped a sweat on her forehead. Tobiichi Origami. She was Mana's ex-colleague as well as (self-proclaimed) Shidou's lover. Although she is nowhere to be found in the house, if Mana include her within that number, it means Shidou already lay his hands on the total of eight girls.

- Eight girls. Mana felt dizzily at such unknown number.

"N-no... I shouldn't be quick to judge him..."

- Mana shook her head to rouse up herself from collapsing down. She still doesn't know the relations between them and Shidou. Shidou may already have set his mind on someone even if he is getting along well with everyone.

- Even on the surface it looks like nothing but a harem paradise, Mana can't jump to the conclusion that her Nii-sama has gone astray from the morals just from that.

"Which only means... I have no choice but to do some inspection."

- Mana sharpened her eyes and licked her lips.



"Well then... even though I said that, who should I start with..."

- While hiding herself in the patio of Itsuka Residence, Mana put her hand on her chin and thought. Mana won't gain much information from just peeking inside the house, however, jumping in the middle of them and ask is not a good idea either.

- Not only Shidou won't be able to answer that in front of other girls, in the worst case, it is highly likely that Kotori will catch her once everything has ended.

- Mana decided to ask them one by one, except Kotori, whom Mana can't allow herself to be caught by, so she will just observe her from outside, —

'See~, Natsumi-chan! It's not scary~. Let's go, come buy some clothes with me~. Darling~, please let me borrow Natsumi-chan for a moment~'

'I said I won't gooooooooo!?'

- While Mana is thinking that, she heard such voice from inside the house. The front door opens not before long after that with Miku and Natsumi coming out of the house. They are going somewhere together.

"Well then, let's go Natsumi-chan~. I will make you a Hime-sama~"

"Gyaaaa! Yoshinooooo! Yoshinoooooooooooo!"

- Mana thought of Natsumi as if she is a kid who has been forced to go to the dentist.

"...W-Well, this is a chance."

- Mana nodded to herself to change her mood. She planned to ask each of them about their relations with Shidou from the start and both Miku and Natsumi never met Mana before. It is an opportunity she couldn't ask for more.

"Let's go...!"

- Mana then leaves Itsuka Residence to follow them. Miku and Natsumi are still few meters from the front gate.

"Lea-ve me alo-ne-! I don't need new clothes...!"

"It's okay~. I will make you really cute~."

"I said I didn't ask—! For... them..."

- For some reason, Natsumi's voice is getting smaller before she finished her sentence. It looks as though she is embarrassed after being looked at by passers-by from her loud voice.

"A-Anyway, I'm going back..."

"Why not~. Let's change your looks and prepare for winter for once~. Don't you want Darling and Yoshino-chan to praise that you're cute~?"

"Ug..."

- Natsumi was a little startled at Miku's words. However, she then shook her head to remove that thought,

"D-Don't be ridiculous... They can't be saying that..."

- Natsumi turned quiet before she finished her sentence. She may have realised they might actually say that to her. As if she noticed what Natsumi is thinking, Miku is looking at her with a broad grin. Eventually, Natsumi's cheek blushes while she averts her eyes away from Miku and continues,

"...Is that true?"

"Yes~?"

- Miku asked back with a smile as if she doesn't know what Natsumi was trying to say. Natsumi, feeling humiliated, gripped the hem of her skirt and let out a "Gu..." voice,

"...That Shidou and Yoshino... will say... I'm cute..."

- Heard that, Miku let out "Awww!" and put on a face filled with emotion then hug Natsumi tightly.

"Ahhh! How cute! Cute, cute! Cute~~~!"

"Wha...!?"

- Natsumi extends out her arm in hurry trying to get away from Miku.

"....."

- While looking at them and hearing their conversations, Mana dropped a sweat on her cheek. Although Natsumi refused to go to clothing store that hard, with just 'Shidou will praise that you're cute' could get her to change her mind that easily. No matter how Mana looks at it, the expression of her is that of a girl in love.

- Miku is even worse. It may look like she only loves cute girls on the surface, however, Mana surely heard the moment she naturally calls 'Darling'. Darling. She said Darling. That's the word used to call someone one's love the most, and judging from Natsumi's reaction, that 'Darling' is definitely Shidou.

- Mana nearly knelt down to the ground once she came up with that conclusion. That Izayoi Miku, the national idol is calling 'Darling' without shame on the street. Mana wonders what Shidou has done to Miku.

"I-If you want to go then let's go already...! You're going to take your time choosing clothes, aren't you...?"

"Sure~! Well, then let's go~!"

- The two then started walking. Mana, who was thinking, shook her shoulders in surprise and started following them. After they walked for a distance that Shidou won't notice if they make a little noise, Mana sneak around to their front and stood before them.

"—You over there, I'm sorry"

"Ara~?"

"...!"

- Seeing Mana blocking their path, Miku incline her head in wonder. Natsumi only avert her eyes while shaking her shoulders.

"Ufufu~ What is it~? Do you have any business with us—"

- Miku noticed something mid-sentence and flapped her hands. She then shook Mana's hand with a smile on her face,

"Thank you for supporting me~. Do you want a hug as well?"

"Eh?"

- Mana let out a shrill voice but suddenly noticed. Miku misunderstood Mana for one of her fans. Mana shook her head to deny that,

"No, that's not what I meant."

"Ah, you are not? Well, then I'm sorry~. What's your business~?"

"Err..."

- Mana feeling overwhelmed by Miku's unique atmosphere. Even still, she made her determination and continue her words,

"It may strange to ask this out of sudden... but what's the relation of you two with Nii-s — I mean Itsuka Shidou?"

"Fue?"

"...With Shidou?"

- Miku widened her eyes in surprise while Natsumi rose up her voice in dubious tone. Their reaction is not surprising. If someone whom Mana never met before asked her such question, she would have put on her guard for sure. However, Miku loosen her cheek and continue,

"Fufu, you looks too young for a writer looking for a scandal about me~. Are you someone who loves Darling as well, by any chance?"

"What!?"

- Mana widened her eyes at those unexpected words.

"So that Darling is really..."

"Darling is darling~. Ufufu~ Darling sure is heartless, for him to make such a cute girl like you fall for him~"

"Err..."

- Mana not knowing how to respond lowered her eyes in half. There's really no reason for Mana to clear up Miku's misunderstanding if that's going to make things harder. Besides, family love is also a love. While Mana is thinking that, Miku wriggled herself and continue,

"My relation with Darling... was it? Hmm... it's hard to explain in one word~. Well, let's say he kissed and get me naked in the dressing room once."

"Wha...!?"

- Mana felt a shudder of horror runs through her body hearing that words Miku said while blushing. A kiss and... got her naked...? Mana is confused for a while at the words un-associated with 'Nii-sama' in her mind. However, that is not where everything ended. Miku place her hand on Natsumi's shoulder,

"But hasn't Natsumi-chan also kissed with Darling~?"

- And dropped that atomic bomb.

"...!"

"Wha...! What...!"

- Natsumi rolled her eyes while Mana makes a dumbfounded looks.

"Right~ Natsumi-chan?"

"W-Well... yeah..."

"__"

- Mana feels like her vision is turning white at those words Natsumi said while blushing. Two-timing. Ungrateful. Lolicon. Concern. Criminal ... those words dance wildly in her head.

"T-Thank... you... very much..."

- Mana said that and trying to go away from them with her unsteady steps. However, Miku suddenly grabbed the back of her neck,

"Eh...?"

- Mana raised up her voice at sudden happening. Miku looked at her with big smile on her face.

"Ufufu, this might be some destiny that we're met. How about you too? Even though you're cute as you are right now, I could make you even more shining~?"

"Eh? Um, no, I"

"Don't need to be so humble~? We're all a girl who loves Darling~ Ufufu... even though that boyish looks of you is very well suite, don't you want to try some girly clothes as well~?"

"Eh, ah, er, eh... ehrrrrrrrrrr!?"

- Mana was then being dragged along with Natsumi by Miku.



"Haa... haa... if I escaped this far, she won't be able to find me..."

- Mana is hiding herself in a shade of a wall while breathing heavily and wipe off the sweat on her forehead. After that, Miku brought her to the boutique then forcibly coordinate her clothes and peek into the dressing room while she is dressing, telling her 'This is how you should wear it~' and tried to open up the front of her shirt. Once the checkout ended, Mana feared for her own safety and escaped from her.

"I wonder if Natsumi-san is okay..."

- Mana recalled Natsumi's expression full of sorrow when she escaped alone. Well... since they were supposed to go out together, Mana had no choice but to ask her to endure.

"...Haa"

- Mana breathed out a small sigh when she looked at the side mirror of a car parking nearby on the street. Mana's clothing right now is not the hoodie and short pants she always wear but a cute-looking blouse and a skirt. Her hair that was tied up on the back of her head is now released swaying with the wind.

- (At first Miku wanted Mana to make a twin tail, but Mana's pride couldn't allow that considering the ranking of sisters, so she strived to refuse it as much as she could. For Shidou's sister ranking, Mana is the first and Kotori is the second.)

- Either way, Mana thought her appearance now looked like an Ojou-sama from somewhere. She couldn't recognize herself for a slight moment.

"How should I say it, this feels really strange..."

- As expected from an idol and her styling sense. ...However, Mana thought that the perverted acts of her destroyed the entire good image about 'Izayoi Miku' in her mind.

"A-Anyway, Nii-sama takes priority for now."

- Mana averted her eyes from the mirror and mumbled to change her mood then started walking. Mana found out about Shidou's three-timing (Origami included) from her information gathering just now. One of that is the national idol, and another one is a girl of young age. Mana felt dizzy at the greed of her brother.

"...At very least, please stop at three-timing..."

- Mana made that wish while walking back to Itsuka Residence. The other girls should still be in this house.

"It's actually the best if I could just ask Kotori-san..."

- Mana groaned. Even though Kotori is not related to Shidou by blood like Mana, she's still Shidou's sister. More than that, she's also <Ratatoskr>'s commander. There's no better person to know about the situation than her. In fact, Mana even said to her to take care of Nii-sama...

"What were you doing, Kotori-san...! You did not really look over him at all...!"

- Mana frowned and grit her teeth. When she tried to peek inside the house again, Mana learned that the situation had changed from before. It's obvious that Miku and Natsumi are not here, however, Shidou, Tohka, Kaguya and Yuzuru are also nowhere to be found. She could find only Kotori and Yoshino who are standing in the kitchen.

"Kotori-san and... Yoshino-san..."

- Mana couldn't hear what they were talking about from where she was. She crept around to the kitchen without letting her guard down. The conversation voice of the two is heard when she peek into the house,

'Ah, Yoshino, just leave the dish over there, I'll wash it.'

'Thank you very much. But... I can help...'

'Ah, it's okay. I'm going to do it.'

'But...'

- Before Yoshino could say it, 'Yoshino' on her right hand fluttered her hands,

'Ufufu~, you can't do that, Yoshino. Kotori-chan just wants to be useful to Shidou-kun when he's not around.'

'...!'

- Kotori choked at 'Yoshino's' words. However, seems like what she said is not that wrong, Kotori did not reply anything back to her.

'I-I'm sorry. I...'

'D-Don't worry... Well, how should I put it? See, I always let Shidou do all of it? So I think just once in a while...'

- Kotori said while shyly averting away her eyes.

"....."

- Mana frown at the expression of Kotori that looks somewhat crossed the line of brother and sister love.

"...Well, that can't be. Nii-sama and Kotori-san are brother and sister."

- Mana shook her head. She became too nervous because of the happening from earlier.

'Ah—Then I will clean up the room.'

'Yoshino?'

'I want... to be useful to Shidou-san too.'

'Ah... that's right. I'll leave that to you.'

'Thank you!'

- Yoshino cheerfully replied and started cleaning up the table. Saw that, Kotori then started washing the dishes. At a glance, it looks like such a charming scene of a girl. However, since motive of their actions is being useful to Shidou, Mana can't help but to feel unease at the fact.

"N-No, no. I shouldn't overthink about it..."

- Mana's thoughts are going into the negative direction without her knowing it. Mana took a deep breath to calm herself down. However, that moment —

'Ah...'

- Yoshino picked up a bottle with some water in it from the table and shows it to Kotori.

'Um, Yoshino-san. This...'

'Hmm? Ah, that's Shidou's, how come he left it out like that? Can you return it to the fridge for me? You can also drink it if you are thirsty.'

- 'Yoshinon' then response as if she reacts to Kotori's words,

'Eh? Are you saying Yoshino can do an indirect kiss with Shidou-kun?'

'Eh...!?'

'...!?'

- Kotori and Yoshino gulped down their saliva as if they didn't thought of that.

'Ufun~ What are you embarrassed for? Not just the indirect one, hadn't you two already had such a hot kiss with Shidou?'

"What...!?"

- Mana felt a cramp on her cheek hearing 'Yoshinon's' words. Her words are not something she could let pass. Mana placed her ear next to the window to absorb every word they're going to say.

'W-What are you saying out of sudden...!'

'Y-Yoshinon...!'

'Eh? Didn't Yoshino kissed with Shidou-kun back then?'

'U..., I... did...'

"...!?"

- Mana choked at the words Yoshino said while looking down embarrassedly.

'Kotori-chan also did it back at the amusement park, didn't you? Come to think of it, who is Shidou-kun's first kiss again~? Hmm?'

'U... gu... that should be... me... back five years ago...'

(-Kotori-saaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaan!?)

- Mana shouted in her head while feeling as if her eyeballs are coming out of her eye socket at that bombshell words. Five years ago, that means Kotori had already kissed with Shidou by the time she first met Mana. —Et tu, Brute. For some reason, that word came up to Mana's mind.

- No, the problem is not only that. Five years ago, that means Kotori was still 8 or 9 years old. Even though Shidou's age is also reduced by 5 back then, they're still way too early.

"S-So... this is how youth nowadays acts..."

- Mana mumbled in despair and placed her hand on the frame of the window. — That moment, the place where Mana placed her hand on broke and a crack sound is heard.

"What...!"

- Mana shook her shoulders in surprise. Mana did not put much of her weight onto it and thought it might be due to the window frame is already aged at first, however, she quickly realized from looking at the part that dropped to the ground that it is not a window frame, but part of a hidden camera that was skilfully disguised.

"...This is..."

- Mana picked up the part and dropped a sweat on her forehead. One side of the camera has 'No problem' written on it while the other side has 'I don't mind' written... Mana didn't know what it is trying to say.

- However, Mana can't be so leisurely right now,

'—What's that sound just now.'

'I-It's from the outside...!'

- The two inside the house noticed the sound.

"Ku..."

- Mana frowned, lowered her posture and get away from there. However, when she's going out from the front gate, she bumped into a passer-by walking from her right,

"Wa!"

"Nu?"

- Even though Mana could easily evaded it in normal situation, but since she's thinking of something and wearing a skirt she is not used to, her reaction become a bit slower than usual. Mana fell down on her butt.

"Ouch..."

"Mu, I'm sorry. Are you okay?"

- The person Mana bumped into said that to her and lend her a hand. Mana respond to her with "No, it's me who should say sorry" while taking her hand —

"...!"

- Mana saw the face of the other person and lost her words. The person in front of her is Yatogami Tohka whom Mana was going to inquire about Shidou just now. She is wearing a comfortable-looking pair of shoes with a plastic bag on her hand. Looks like she just come back from shopping.

"Mu...? Have I seen you somewhere before...?"

"...! N-No..."

- Even though Mana had met with her, however seems like she doesn't notice because of her clothes and hair style.

"Muu... is that so. I thought I'd seen you somewhere before..."

- When Tohka knitted her eyebrows in doubt, a voice is heard from her back,

"Kuku, what is it Tohka. Stopping there, don't tell me you feel the presence of 'they' who cannot be seen with eyes?"

"Dubious. Who is that person?"

- Saying that, Yamai Kaguya and Yuzuru then walked toward Mana and Tohka. Looks like they just went out together.

"Umu. I bumped into her just now."

- When Tohka said that, Kaguya laugh out cheerfully while folding her arms.

"Kaka. Looks like your training is still not enough. If it was me, I could have lightly evaded her?"

- Tohka let out a "Muu..." sound and frowned at Kaguya's words,

"Normally, I should be able to do that too. But you see. I just finished eating Shidou's food... Mu, it's a matter of lightness*... That's right, I'm gravid*! Shidou made me gravid!"

"Eh!?"

[note: lightly/agilely = 身輕 consist of body(身)+light(輕) / pregnant/gravid = 身重 consist of body(身)+heavy(重), a play on words]

- Mana made a stupefied looks at Tohka's bombshell words. Gravid, or in other words, pregnant. That's the word indicating a woman have a baby inside her womb. The moment Mana realized that, she felt she is turning pale quickly.

"Advice. ...Tohka, that's not the right word."

"Mu? Is that so?"

- Mana felt she heard a conversation between Tohka and Yuzuru, but their words couldn't reach Mana who is still confusing at the situation. Mana couldn't believe they have already gone to that stage.

- Not to mention about marriage, but for a high school student such as Shidou to support a kid on his own should be very hard. Mana felt an indescribable amount despair and sorrow as well as anger boiling up in her mind.

"Er... will Shidou-san take responsibility for what he has done?"

"Nu? Do you know Shidou?"

"Y-Yeah, well. He took care of me a little while ago."

- Mana smoothed it over, but Tohka replied her back with "Ooh" as if she is convinced with Mana's words.

"—A-Anyway, how is it? More importantly, do you agree to... well, become like that?"

"Muu... it's not that I want to become like this, but Shidou is really skilful today, more than usual, and I become like this before I knew it."

"More skilful than usual...!? W-Wait a minute, you do that all the time!?"

"What are you talking about? Obviously we do."

"Wha... wha..."

- Mana felt her teeth chattering. It is unbelievable that Mana's Nii-sama is such a Shameless Great Demon King like that...! While Mana is thinking that, Tohka said, "You would feel week if you don't eat everyday" but she couldn't hear it.

"T-Then, what about you two, what are your relation with Shidou-san...!?"

- Mana looked at Yamai sisters with imploring eyes.

"Hm? My relation with Shidou? Kuku... if I were to put it in a second word... we're master and servant who have been bound with a blood contract."

"Answer. Both Yuzuru and Kaguya got our important things stolen away by Shidou at the same time. Shidou is our common property."

"At the same time...!? Master and servant...!?"

- Mana put her hands on her head at the new abnormal information.

"W-Wait a minute! It... can't be..."

- Mana dropped a cold sweat on her forehead with her legs shaking. However, Mana can't stand still and do that forever. Tohka suspect of something and move her nose.

"Nu...? I think I've smell this somewhere before..."

"...! I-I'll excuse myself!"

- Mana then ran away from that place. After a while when she confirmed nobody is following, Mana lowered her speed.

"Haa... Haa..."

- Even though her feet have stopped, her heart is still beating fast. That's not surprising, since the inspection to prove Shidou's innocence ended up proving that he did get his hands on everyone.

- Mana wished that everything was just candid camera by Kotori whom learned about her visit from somewhere and just want to trick her — However, Mana doesn't think that everyone is lying.

- When everyone talked about Shidou, they all have the same face of girl in love. No matter how much Mana wants to deceive herself, she can't do it now that she has seen the expression on their face.

- There's no choice but to admit that Shidou kissed (or did something beyond that) with all the girls and they do not hate Shidou for it. No matter how hard she tried to smooth it over, that fact won't change.

- Mana gripped her fist tight. — There's still one thing Mana must confirm.

"Please prepare yourself... Nii-sama."



"I'm back."

- When Shidou entered the living room after he is back from shopping, everyone is already waiting for him.

"Ah, welcome back, Darling! See, please see this!"

- Miku who is waiting near the entrance said it in high spirits and pulled the girl next to her to show her to Shidou. Shidou couldn't notice for a second since her atmosphere is completely different, but the girl in a cute one piece dress is Natsumi who Miku brought her out earlier.

"Ohh, Natsumi, isn't that cute?"

".....!"

- When Shidou said that, Natsumi blushed and mumbled something in her mouth.

"...T-Thanks..."

- Miku looked at her reaction with a pleasure face but let out an "Ah" and flapped her hands as if she is remembering something.

"By the way, Darling, when I and Natsumi-chan went out for shopping, there was a girl whom approached us..."

"? A girl? So she is Miku's fan?"

"That's what I thought at first~ But seems like she is not my fan but Darling's fan"

"What...?"

- Shidou opened his mouth wide,

"My fan...? What's that?"

"Umm, I don't know in details either, but she asked us about our relation with Darling. So I thought she is someone who has feelings for you."

"Mu!"

- When Miku said that, Tohka who is lying on her stomach on the sofa suddenly reacted. If she had a tail, it would be standing right now.

"That reminds me, we also met with that woman."

"Eh? Really?"

- When Shidou asked, this time Yamai sisters nodded,

"Umu, we did meet her. When we got back from our errand, she came out from the garden of this house. Kuku... looks like there's more to this than it seems."

"Consent. Shidou, do you have any ideas?"

"Idea... well, even if you say so..."

- Shidou made a troubled face and scratched his cheek. Even if they say so, Shidou doesn't have any ideas.

"What about Kotori and Yoshino? Did someone visit you?"

"No, nobody visited us. Ah, but..."

- Kotori remembered something and put her hands on her chin.

"? Did something happen?"

"Um... when I and Kotori-san were alone at home... I heard a sound from outside of kitchen... as if someone is peeking inside the house..."

- Yoshino answered Shidou's question with frightened looks.

"What?"

"I see... so that wasn't just me. I wonder about that girl Tohka and Miku met as well. If she is Shidou's fan then that might be okay, but it can't be denied that she might be DEM or AST's personnel..."

- Kotori made a difficult face and groaned,

"Anyway, everyone please be careful. I'll look for her from <Ratatoskr> side as well."

- Everyone then nodded at Kotori's words. Inside of that group, only Natsumi placed her hand on her mouth as if she is thinking of something.

☆

- The next day.

"Nii-sama!"

- Mana shouted in loud voice and widely opens the door that leads to the living room of Itsuka Residence. In the living room, Shidou is sitting on the sofa rolling his eyes in surprise, likely at Mana who entered the house out of sudden.

"Huh...!? W-What...?"

- Nobody's around. That's right; this is because Mana kept waiting in front of Itsuka Residence until nobody but Shidou is inside before she entered the house.

"Long time no see, it's me, Mana! It might be sudden, but Nii-sama, I have a question! I'm happy that you're healthy, but aren't you a bit too healthy?"

- Shidou knitted his eyebrows puzzlingly at Mana's rapid talk.

"Mana...? W-Wait a minute! What's this!? More importantly, where have you been—"

"No question allowed! Now, stand up over there nice and easy!"

- When Mana moved her finger, Shidou stood up hesitantly. Mana nodded with satisfaction, folded her arms then continued,

"I did some research about Nii-sama relationship with women yesterday."

"R-Relationship with women..."

- Shidou dropped a sweat on his cheek as if that word of Mana is unexpected.

"It's okay, you don't need to act dumb anymore. I already know you're an eight-timing lover boy."

"E-eight-timing...!?"

- Shidou let out a shrill voice. Mana doesn't know if he did that on purpose, or really did not realise it. Either way, it is not something to be praise of. Mana let out a breath irritably.

"A boy must love only one girl for his whole life! If you just spread out your love everywhere, the girls would be very pitiful! So —"

- Mana sharpened her eyes, rose up her index finger and pointed it to the middle of Shidou's eyebrows.

"Here, right now! Nii-sama must declare it! The one that Nii-sama loves the most! The one that Nii-sama actually loves!"

"Eh... ehhh!?"

- Shidou then made a flabbergasted face at Mana's words.

☆

"Nu..."

- Tohka who just came from the mansion to Itsuka Residence make a wondering looks after she opened the entrance door. It's not surprising, since Kotori, Yoshino, Yamai sisters and Miku are assembled in the corridor in front of the living room.

"What are you doing?"

'...!'

- When Tohka asked, everyone raise up their finger in front of their mouth telling Tohka to be quiet.

"Mu... Muu...?"

- Even though Tohka didn't know what was happening, she felt the situation was not normal. Tohka walked quietly to where everyone is assembling,

"...So what is it?"

- When Tohka asked in a small voice, Kotori, staying quiet, told Tohka with her eyes to peek into the opening of the door of the living room. When Tohka looked inside the room, she saw two people inside. First one is this house's owner, Shidou. Other one is Shidou's sister — Takamiya Mana.

"Shidou and... Mana? What are they doing..."

- Tohka stopped her words before she could finish her sentence. The reason is simple —

"Well, then... choose one, Nii-sama! Tohka-san, Kotori-san, Yoshino-san, Kaguya-san, Yuzuru-san, Miku-san, Natsumi-san — and Master Sergeant Tobiichi! Who is the one that Nii-sama love!?"

- Mana is pointing her finger at Shidou while shouting that.

"What...!"

- Tohka widened her eyes and looked inside the living room quietly like everyone else. She felt her heart is beating fast. Tohka feel a strange feeling of wanting to know and not wanting to know at the same time within her heart.

- Shidou who made a troubled face opened his mouth after a while,

"E-Even if you said that out of sudden..."

"Very unmanly, Nii-sama! If you are Mana's Nii-sama, then you should get yourself together!"

- Mana put her hand on her waist and said that in a harsh tone. After Shidou heard that, he scratched his head and let out a breath as if he has made a determination. Shidou looked at Mana,

"—Okay. I understand. I will answer it. I'm—Mana's brother."

"That is the spirit. Then... please answer honestly. Who's the one that Nii-sama loves the most?"

"That would be —"

- Shidou took a deep breath,

'.....'

- Tohka and others who are observing the situation from outside the door caught their breath after Shidou's reaction. Shidou look into Mana's eyes and declare,

"— Yoshino."

- At that words.

'.....!?'

- All the spirits, who were assembled on the other side of the door, shook themselves and gathered their eyesight toward Yoshino.

"...!?"

"—, —!?"

"..., —!!"

- Since they can't let out their voice right now, they are communicating to each other with only reaction. The only thing for sure is everyone is in panic. Everyone is swimming their eyes left and right with sweat on their forehead. Yoshino's panic is the most remarkable. Her face turned completely red, not knowing how to react.

- However, in contrast to everyone's panic, Shidou then continues his passion,

"I can't resist it anymore... I always love Yoshino! Yoshino is my oasis!"

- Shidou placed his hand on Mana's shoulder and said as if he is pleading to her.

"...!"

- The moment Tohka heard that, she felt as if her heart is squeezing tight. Tohka likes Yoshino as well. She also knows that Shidou likes Yoshino. However... for some reason, once Tohka heard that word, she couldn't resist it. She pushed the door and stepped into the living room —

"...Haa?"

- However, Tohka stopped herself before she did that. The reason is simple, Mana is staring at Shidou like a girl leader of delinquent group of 90s manga. For some reason, Tohka felt top left of Mana's face is captioned with "!?".

"Hii..."

- Shidou shook his shoulders at sudden change in Mana's looks.

"Hey... well, I can't hear that just now. Can you say it again one more time, Nii-sama? If you say something ridiculous again, I'll change your face forever."

"E-erm..."

- Shidou felt a sweat is pouring out from his face. He swears his eyes left and right and answers her with a tiny voice.

"M-Maybe... Tohka... I think..."

"Aa?"

- Mana threatened him again hearing his answer. Shidou shook his body once again.

"U-um, Kotori then...?"

"Aan?"

"Hii! What about K-Kaguya!"

"Hooou?"

"! A-Actually Yuzuru...!"

"Aa?"

"I-I mean Miku...!"

"Hmp?"

"...! Ah, right! Origami..."

"I can't hear you."

"Er... erm... only Natsumi's left..."

"What did you just said?"

- Mana reacts to Shidou's answers in displeased tone. Shidou shivered in fear as if he is going to cry. However few seconds later, Shidou noticed something and widened his eyes.

"I, I see... So that's what you want."

- Seeing his reaction, Mana then let out her breath.

"...Well, well. Finally you realized."

"Yeah... I'm sorry, Mana. I'm such an idiot. — Even though such a cute sister is in front of me right now."

"...Haaaaaaaaaaaa...?"

- Mana knitted her brows at Shidou's answer once again.

"Eh? T-That's wrong...?"

- When Shidou said it listlessly, Mana then grabbed his face.

"Hgiil!?"

"Well... your joke has gone too far, Nii-sama? Mana remembered Mana said I want you to answer it honestly?"

- A blue vein popped up on Mana's forehead and she continued in a furious tone.

"And I thought I'd forgive you depending on your answer. This is not good. I guess castrating you before the damage extends beyond this might be the best for this world..."

"Hi... Hii...!?"

"Shidou!"

- After how many times Shidou screamed, Tohka pushed the door and stepped inside the living room. Seems like she can't resist seeing Shidou being bullied anymore. Not only Tohka, everyone also burst into living room at the same timing.

"What...!"

- Mana surprised. When she saw the presence of all the spirits, Mana frowned then put her hand away from Shidou and escaped from the window. Before she left, she says,

"—I can't believe Mana's Nii-sama is such scum. Please prepare yourself the next time we met!"

- She said that and jumped out of the window.

"Ah, wait, Mana!"

- Kotori shouted and tried to follow her, but she's too late. Mana jumped across the wall in the garden and not before long she could no longer be seen.

"S-Shidou! Are you okay!"

"Dar~ling~"

"Ku... Mana has gotten away..."

- Everyone then rush to Shidou who has collapsed down to the floor.

"Ah, ahh... everyone..."

- Shidou said in a weak voice and raised his hands. However, next moment, Shidou's body which is surrounded by Tohka and others started faintly illuminating and [Pon!] Shidou turned into a small girl.

"Na... Natsumi!?"

- Kotori called her name in shrill voice. Shidou in front of their eyes until now is not Shidou, but rather Natsumi with her transformation power. Even though they may be able to notice if looking at her closely, since there's no someone to compare with and their vision were very limited, not to mention they were in such a tense situation, nobody noticed it's her.

"Natsumi! What are you doing?"

- When Kotori asked, Natsumi answered while standing up staggeringly.

"W-Well... I heard a suspicious girl is following Shidou around... so I thought I'd lure her out as a decoy..."

"Then what about that answers?"

"...Well, I noticed her identity while talking with her, so I thought I'd play some joke on her for a little..."

- Hearing Natsumi's answer, everyone then let out a sigh.

"What an alarmist..."

"That's right~. I was very surprised~"

- Everyone let out their voice of relief. However, only Kotori make a difficult face,

"...This is not good."

"Mu? What is it? That wasn't Shidou so there should be no problem, no?"

"Not that, even though we know the trick... Mana is still misunderstanding. What will happen if she runs into Shidou like that."

'Ah...'

- The spirits then widened their eyes simultaneously.

☆

"I can't believe Nii-sama is someone like that!"

- Mana swung the plastic bag on her hand while walking down the street. Mana bought it as a present to Shidou but she couldn't find the right timing to give it to him, even more so after she heard such a pitiable answer from him.

- Mana grinded her teeth after seeing Shidou's pitiful face from earlier come up in her mind. Even though Mana asked him to choose from one of them, but that was only valid if he had never laid his hands on any of them.

- Now that he has teased everyone by doing something beyond kissing with them, and later confessed that everyone are just for fun except for his main girl, that's just too immoral.

"What should I do...!"

- Mana said with irritating tone while make a turn at corner,

"—Eh? Mana? Isn't that Mana!"

- She heard that voice from her right.

"Hai? Eh... Nii-sama!?"

- When Mana looked at the direction, she let out a voice in surprise. The person standing there is her brother who she just met earlier — Itsuka Shidou.

"...Hoou? So you could catch up to Mana? That's not bad, but what's your business with me? Since you followed me like this, this means you have a new answer for me?"

"What...? What are you saying?"

- Shidou answered back as if he's playing dumb. Mana knitted her eyebrows in irritation.

"What is, it's obviously about the question earlier! Tohka-san, Kotori-san, Yoshino-san, Kaguya-san, Yuzuru-san, Miku-san, Natsumi-san and Master Sergeant Tobiichi! Which one does Nii-sama choose!?"

"Ha... Haa? Choose...?"

"Anyway, please answer me! Mana is at her limit right now!"

- Shidou is still making a puzzled face. However, he noticed Mana's unusual atmosphere and look back at her,

"Even if you said choosing... I can't do that."

"...! How irresponsible—"

"—You may get angry since you said I should choose only one... but for me, everyone is important. I can't tolerate having one of them missing. That's why my answer is — 'Everyone'."

"....."

- To that words Shidou said solemnly,

"...Hehe"

- Mana loosened her cheek.

"Even though it took some time, let me forgive you. This is Mana's Nii-sama for me. — As if you're a different person from earlier."

"Eh...?"

- Shidou returned to her with a bewildering face.

"Mana did say to choose only one person. In fact, that's what I believed it should be. Mana wants Nii-sama to love only one girl and make her happy with sincerity — however,"

- Mana widened her eyes all of a sudden like a Kabuki actor,

"Since you already laid your hands on them, then there's no choice. — Mana's Nii-sama should make them all happy!"

"Erm..."

"Answer!"

"S-Sure...!"

- Shidou nodded by being overwhelmed by Mana.

"Well, then I'll excuse myself here. — Ah, please have this."

- Mana then hand over the plastic bag in her hand to Shidou.

"Eh? What is this...?"

"Please remain in good health. — I guess the next time I visit you, I'll be an auntie?"

- Mana then waved her hand and run away.



"W-What was that..."

- Shidou who has been left alone gaped at Mana's back which is getting further and further away. Shidou then realized a moment later that he hasn't had any talk with Mana who disappeared for a while and tried to follow her, however, Mana is nowhere to be seen by that time.

"....."

- Shidou looked inside the plastic bag Mana handed to him without saying anything. There is a baby bottle and disposable diaper and other childcare product packed inside the plastic bag.

"Really... what was that...?"

- Shidou, whom didn't really know what was happening, only stupefyingly mumbled.

[Ended]

Translator: ??? (If someone can find who translated this it would be very helpful)

Source: <http://pastebin.com/dq8gnMyd>

Editor: Liam Dell. (Possibly others previously, can someone check?)